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WELSH SCHOOLS' FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

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WELSH SCHOOLS' FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION (WSFA)

SAFEGUARDING, CHILD PROTECTION AND WELFARE POLICY

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1. Policy Statement

The Welsh Schools' Football Association (WSFA) is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults involved in football activities under its jurisdiction.

The WSFA believes that every child has the right to:

- Be safe.
- Be listened to.
- Be respected.
- Enjoy football in a positive environment.
- Be protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation, bullying, discrimination, and harm.

The welfare of the child is paramount and shall take precedence over all other considerations, including performance, competition, and organisational reputation.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Players
- Coaches
- Team Managers
- Teachers
- Referees and Match Officials
- Volunteers
- Committee Members
- Medical Personnel
- Parents and Carers
- Spectators attending WSFA events

The policy applies to all WSFA activities including:

- Matches
- Training sessions
- Representative fixtures
- Festivals and tournaments
- Residential trips
- Travel and transport arrangements
- Educational activities
- Online and social media communication

Child or Young Person: Any person under 18 years of age.

Vulnerable Adult: An adult who may be unable to protect themselves from abuse, harm, exploitation or neglect due to disability, illness or personal circumstances.

3. Safeguarding Principles

The WSFA is committed to the following principles:

Child-Centred Approach

The welfare of children and young people is the primary consideration in all decision-making.

Equality

All children have the right to protection regardless of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Social or economic background

Partnership Working

Effective safeguarding requires cooperation between:

- Children
- Parents and carers
- Schools
- Clubs
- Local Authorities
- Social Services
- Police
- Football Association of Wales

Accountability

All concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon promptly and appropriately.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

WSFA Executive Committee

The Executive Committee will:

- Promote a safeguarding culture.
- Review safeguarding policies annually.
- Ensure safeguarding is a standing agenda item.
- Monitor safeguarding compliance throughout the Association.

Child Protection Officer

The Child Protection Officer will:

- Receive safeguarding concerns.
- Maintain confidential safeguarding records.
- Liaise with statutory agencies.
- Liaise with the FAW Safeguarding Team.
- Provide safeguarding guidance.
- Oversee referrals and monitor outcomes.

Coaches, Officials and Volunteers

All adults involved in the WSFA must:

- Prioritise the welfare of children.
- Follow safeguarding procedures.
- Report concerns without delay.
- Undertake safeguarding training where required.
- Maintain professional boundaries at all times.

5. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The WSFA is committed to equality of opportunity and creating an inclusive football environment.

No individual shall suffer discrimination because of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Race

- Ethnic Origin
- Religion or Belief
- Sexual Orientation
- Marital Status
- Socio-Economic Background

Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action.

6. Safer Recruitment and DBS Checks

The WSFA recognises the importance of safer recruitment and selection procedures.

Where appropriate individuals must:

- Complete an application process.
- Provide satisfactory references.
- Complete safeguarding training.
- Hold an Enhanced DBS certificate where required.

DBS information will be managed confidentially and in accordance with safeguarding legislation and FAW requirements.

7. Code of Conduct

All members of the WSFA are expected to:

- Treat others with dignity and respect.
- Promote fair play and positive behaviour.
- Act as positive role models.
- Avoid inappropriate language or behaviour.
- Report safeguarding concerns.
- Adhere to WSFA policies and procedures.

The following will not be tolerated:

- Bullying
- Harassment
- Discrimination
- Intimidation
- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Misconduct

8. Understanding Abuse

Abuse may occur in a variety of settings and may be perpetrated by adults or other young people.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse includes:

- Hitting
- Shaking
- Burning
- Biting
- Excessive or inappropriate physical punishment

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse includes:

- Grooming
- Sexual communication
- Inappropriate touching
- Sexual exploitation
- Online abuse

Any sexual activity involving a child is abuse.

Emotional Abuse

Examples include:

- Persistent criticism
- Humiliation
- Intimidation
- Threatening behaviour
- Excessive pressure to perform

Neglect

Examples include:

- Inadequate supervision
- Failure to protect from harm
- Ignoring injury or medical concerns
- Failure to meet basic needs

Bullying

Bullying can be:

- Physical
- Verbal
- Emotional
- Cyber/Online
- Discriminatory

The WSFA adopts a zero-tolerance approach to bullying.

9. Recognising Signs of Abuse

Possible indicators include:

- Unexplained injuries.
- Sudden behavioural changes.
- Withdrawal from friends or activities.
- Fear of specific people
- Poor attendance.
- Significant emotional distress.
- Poor hygiene or neglect.
- Sexually inappropriate behaviour or language.

These signs do not necessarily mean abuse has occurred but should always be taken seriously

10. Responding to Concerns and Disclosures

If a child makes a disclosure:

DO

✓ Remain calm.

✓ Listen carefully.

✓ Take the child seriously.

✓ Reassure them they have done the right thing.

✓ Explain that you may need to share the information.

✓ Record accurately using the child's own words.

✓ Report immediately.

DO NOT

✗ Promise confidentiality.

✗ Ask leading questions.

✗ Investigate the matter yourself.

✗ Confront the alleged perpetrator.

✗ Delay reporting.

11. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

Immediate Danger

If a child is at immediate risk of harm:

Call 999 immediately.

Take all reasonable steps to ensure the immediate safety of the child before notifying the WSFA Child Protection Officer.

Reporting Procedure

Step 1 - Make Safe

Ensure the child is safe.

Step 2 - Record

Record factual information including:

- Date and time.
- Names involved.
- Location.
- What was observed or disclosed.
- Actions already taken.

Step 3 - Report

Report immediately to:

- WSFA Child Protection Officer; or
- Designated Welfare Officer.

Step 4 - Referral

Where necessary, concerns will be referred to:

- Social Services
- Police
- FAW Safeguarding Team
- Other statutory agencies

Step 5 - Follow Up

The WSFA will monitor the situation until all safeguarding actions are completed.

12. How WSFA Handles Report

All safeguarding reports will be:

Acknowledged

Every concern will be taken seriously.

Assessed

Information will be reviewed by the Child Protection Officer.

Referred

Where appropriate, referrals will be made to statutory agencies.

Managed

Protective measures may include:

- Risk assessments.
- Additional supervision.
- Temporary suspension from activities.
- Restrictions on contact with children.

Reviewed

Cases will remain under review until concerns have been resolved.

13. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information will be shared only where necessary to:

- Protect children.
- Meet legal responsibilities.
- Support safeguarding investigations.

No person should ever guarantee confidentiality to a child making a disclosure

14. Whistleblowing

The WSFA encourages all members to report:

- Poor practice.
- Unsafe behaviour.
- Safeguarding breaches.
- Abuse or neglect.

Anyone reporting concerns in good faith will be supported and protected from victimisation.

15. Relationships of Trust

Adults working with children occupy positions of trust and must:

- Maintain professional boundaries.
- Avoid inappropriate relationships.
- Never exploit their position.

Any abuse of trust will be treated as a serious safeguarding matter.

16. Online Safety and Social Media

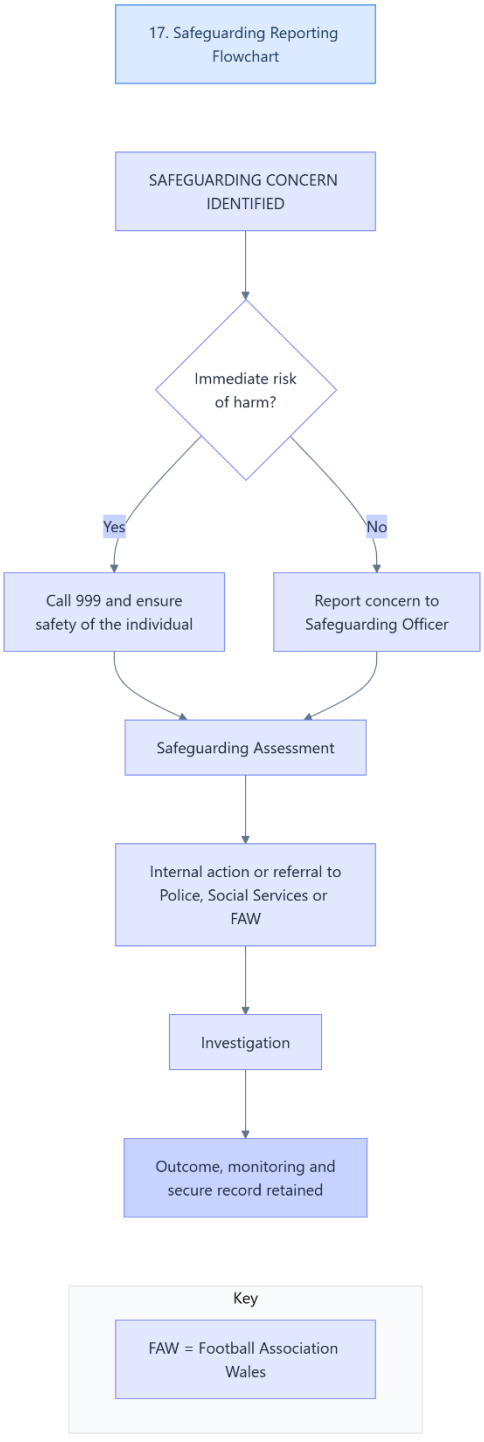
Communication with players must always be:

- Appropriate
- Transparent
- Professional
- Necessary

Adults should avoid unnecessary private communication with children through social media platforms or messaging services.

17. Safeguarding Reporting Flowchart

WSFA Safeguarding Concern Reporting Procedure for Players, Children, Adults at Risk and All Participants



Key:

- **ASO** = Association Safeguarding Officer
- **AWO** = Area Welfare Officer
- **FAW** = Football Association of Wales
- **WSFA** = Welsh Schools Football Association

18. Key Safeguarding Contacts

WSFA Child Protection Officer

Terry Walker
6 Willow Court
Bryn Estyn Lane
Wrexham
LL13 9NE

Mobile: 07752 672403

E mail: texwalker66@hotmail.co.uk

FAW Safeguarding Team

Telephone: 02920 435830

Email: safeguarding@faw.cymru

NSPCC Helpline

0808 800 5000

Childline

0800 1111

19. Monitoring

This policy shall be reviewed annually by the WSFA Executive Committee, or sooner if required due to:

- Changes in legislation.
- Changes to FAW safeguarding requirements.
- Serious safeguarding incidents.

- Recommendations from audits or reviews.

Related Documents	FAW Safeguarding Policy, WSFA Codes of Conduct, Equality Policy

WSFA Safeguarding Commitment

The Welsh Schools' Football Association believes that every child has the right to participate in football in a safe, positive, inclusive and enjoyable environment. If you see something, hear something or suspect something, report it immediately. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

TW/WSFA/10/2026

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